

The GRANGE

ISSUE: 76

APRIL / MAY 1999

← LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD →

It is astonishing how far our Grange year is flying by. I just want to share with you a few events that we have been through together, so far. During March Break we had 2,273 visitors! The whole of the A.G.O. had 6,735 so we had a very good percentage of the total. Children watched the spinners, tried to match pictures with actual objects in the house, made and coloured thaumatropes and they all seemed happy and busy – and so were we!

Al DeMatos has completed five years as one of our special volunteers at The Grange. His Thursday group produced a marvellous cake to celebrate the occasion with five candles and *Congratulations* written on the top, as well as cards signed by everyone on his shift. Al has kept meticulous records of his baking and so far has produced 1,288 loaves of bread during those five years.

On Members Day over 70 enthusiastic people toured the Grange in five different groups during the afternoon and evening. These were members of the A.G.O. who, with a few exceptions, had never been to The Grange.

The Goldwin Smith library brought gasps of surprise and delight from everyone. Helen Hatton toured the members in the evening with her usual infectious enthusiasm.

Looking forward. We expect The Grange to be much featured when the A.G.O. celebrates its formal inauguration as the Art Gallery of Toronto 100 years ago when the year 2000 arrives.

Our Curatorial Assistant, Jenny Rieger, has lots of plans to make The Grange more exciting. Already her touches are felt throughout the house.

What will the future bring for us? Will our research expert find a box full of letters written by Harriette telling of her activities each day?

It is surprising how many Boulton and Dixon relatives do make their way to The Grange with a feeling of visiting their ancestral home. Long may we be here.

- Mona Rankin, *The Grange Chair*

STEWARDSHIP and MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

- by Tory Thompson -

On March 23, 1999, Jenny Rieger, Jane Heinemann and I attended a workshop on the maintenance of historical buildings housing museums. That is, the care of the biggest artifact of all – the building!

Susan Burke, manager and curator of the Joseph Schneider Haus in Kitchener, where the workshop was held, spoke about the restoration and maintenance of her own museum. She has been there since the beginning (1979) and has records of everything that was done – even down to the original paint formulas used. She stressed that building maintenance is a combination of good housekeeping and vigilance. The Joseph Schneider Haus has devised its own maintenance manual and checklist for inspecting the house inside and out.

Next we heard from a panel of curators from a variety of unusual museums – all housed in buildings that were never meant to be museums. The curator of the Museum of Steam & Technology in Hamilton had unique restoration problems. (see *Stewardship ... page 2 for continuation of this article*)

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Volunteer Executive
1998-99**

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COMING EVENTS

St. Anne's Church

April Training Supper features the Rev. Peter Orme who will discuss St. Anne's Church and the Group of Seven treasures at the church.

Date: Tuesday, April 20, 1999 (to be re-scheduled due to TTC strike)

Time: 5:30 pm, Music Room, The Grange

May General Meeting for The Grange

Speaker: Matthew Teitelbaum

Date: May 10, 1999

Time: 6:00 pm, Music Room, The Grange

BUS TRIP

This year's bus trip is to Dundurn Castle, Whitehern and the Botanical Gardens.

Date: Tuesday, May 18th

Cost: \$ 50.00 (Please refer to sign-up sheet)

STEWARDSHIP and MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

Continued from front page

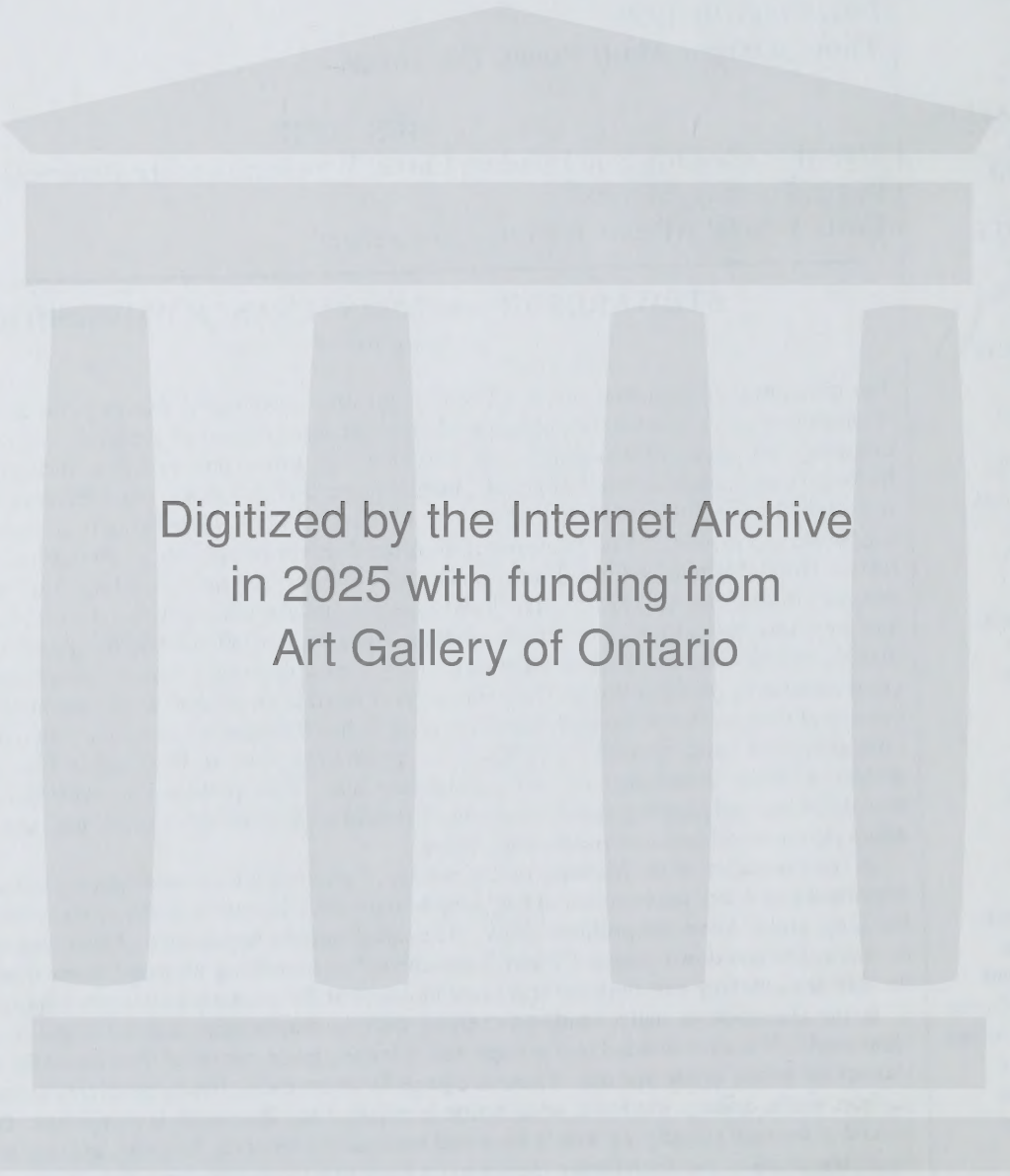
The museum is an industrial site, c. 1859, of eight structures ranging from a pump house to a shed. In order to make it safe for the public they had to get rid of masses of asbestos, lead paint, pigeon droppings and drums of industrial waste. His challenge was to portray it as a museum of social history – rough, clean and full of people, men, women, and children, from different ethnic groups working 12-hour days – and to avoid the idea of beautifying or Disneyfying it. It is now 70% accessible to the public. The Museum of Stratford-Perth is also housed in an unusual building – the former Normal School, built in 1908. An attractive 4-storey red brick building, it is right on the doorstep of the Festival Theatre. The building was in good condition when the country took it over and they have basically maintained the original appearance with blackboards, library shelves and hall lockers incorporated into museum displays. They were able to keep a huge stained glass window commemorating the First World War with the promise that the alumni would maintain it. The curator of the Eva Brook Donly Museum in Simcoe has different maintenance problems. A 2-storey Georgian brick building from the 1840s, it was given to the town in 1940 and in 1967 added a gallery, a library, a meeting room and a freight elevator. Their problems are with maintaining the new additions and juggling space – how much should be devoted to historical use, how much for administration and rental of rooms for income.

A representative of the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation gave a talk on the importance of every museum to have its own Maintenance Manual specific to its collection, type of building, and to know the problem spots. He emphasized the importance of checking the roof, eavestroughs and downspouts. "Water is the enemy" is something we heard many times over during the day and catching and stopping leaks and moisture at the source is extremely important.

In the afternoon we had a hands-on exercise with the maintenance manual of the Joseph Schneider Haus itself. We were divided into groups with a leader, given copies of their checklist and asked to inspect the house inside and out. There is a page for every room, listing problems to look for on each surface, walls, ceiling, windows, what action is required and date work is completed. Outside we looked at the roof (ideally we would have had binoculars), shingles, flashing, gutters, walls, doors, windows, shutters and foundation. (Jenny has a copy of an inspection checklist if you want to see it.) As we finished each group read out what they had found – good and bad. This exercise made it apparent how important it is to have a Maintenance Manual and that it is used on a regular basis (6 months, 1 year).

As a parting word we were reminded again that water is the enemy and that careful and regular inspection and maintenance pays off versus expensive repair jobs later on. Protecting the building against the elements and wear and tear by visitors will certainly help maintain the building in perpetuity.

A stimulating learning opportunity in the midst of dedicated and knowledgeable curators and Ministry staff.



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https://archive.org/details/grangenewsletter00artg_76

I have always seen this column as a wonderful opportunity to communicate new ideas and plans to all of you for feedback and comments – so here I go again. Over the past four months many of you were involved in the focus groups and follow-up discussions about what directions The Grange should be moving in. The Grange Council took this information into account when creating a vision statement, which were distributed. We then formed a small working group to create an interpretive plan. This plan contains five different areas of interpretation that could be done in the house – either through casual visitor interactions, didactic panels or exhibitions. I am including the whole document that will be going to Matthew and the AGO Board for approval. Please give me your comments.

VISION STATEMENT

As part of the Canadian Art Department, The Grange promotes an appreciation and understanding of the social and artistic history of Toronto and Ontario reflecting its role as the historic nucleus of the Art Gallery of Ontario and the oldest brick house in Toronto.

INTERPRETIVE PLAN

Preamble:

The Grange is unique. First and foremost it is a home. While not being restored as the Boulton's home, the visitor is immediately aware of being in a domestic environment with its associated smells, objects and sounds. This can create a powerful connection with the visitor and should be kept in the forefront of all interpretive planning. However, The Grange's uniqueness does not stop there. Unlike other historic homes in Ontario, The Grange is a part of a major art museum and, as such, has the opportunity to go beyond the restrictions of domestic and social interpretation that limit other historic sites. The Grange can provide an opportunity, through art, to explore issues of collecting, taste, why we like to live with art, why art is valued, from both an historic and contemporary perspective. Portraits can come alive through the stories they can tell us about the people in the house – likewise, the house can come alive through portraits and archival material.

Interpretive Plan

In order that the goal of the Vision Statement be met, several interpretive streams were identified. These different areas are all of equal importance however, at any one time, one or more may take precedence.

- ◆ To increase our understanding of the history of art collecting and appreciation in Toronto and Ontario.
- ◆ To provide a context for the interpretation of the social functions of art.
- ◆ To place The Grange in context with its site by focusing on the estate and on the growing city of Toronto.
- ◆ To highlight the history and use of the building as a home and the early art museum through a variety of means (architecture, interior design, the Jeanne Minninnick collection of furnishings, the restoration, archeological evidence, and the garden and the park).
- ◆ To gain a greater understanding of the people in the house by focusing on social life and customs and national and civic politics.

Strategies for Implementation

- ◆ Volunteers will continue to interpret the house for the casual visitor and lead booked tours and educational programmes and will focus their activities on the new directions The Grange is moving in.
- ◆ Hands on programming will continue to be a part of educational programmes. While this can include cooking activities, it should also include activities with an art focus, such as silhouette making, framing activities, etc.
- ◆ Didactic and room displays should allow us to focus on our various interpretive goals in innovative and exciting ways.
- ◆ The art in the house should be actively interpreted, not just from an art historical perspective but as central to enlivening and peopling the house.
- ◆ Opportunities should be explored to increase the amount and range of art and archival material in the house.

GOVERNANCE

The Grange is a designated heritage property and a national historic site. In 1992, The Grange (Board) Committee was disbanded and re-formed as The Grange Council. The Council is a sub-committee of the Canadian Curatorial Committee and reports to the Board of the AGO through them on a yearly basis.

The Mandate of The Grange Council is:

- ◆ To prepare a budget for The Grange Fund, the Crookston Fund and the Marjorie Boulton Bequest. These funds are to remain intact and funds designated for The Grange are legally bound to be spent there.
- ◆ To monitor the conservation and replacement of the collections, including the library holdings, and maintain the historic character of the house.
- ◆ To determine a long-term policy of conservation, replacement and repair with the respective departments in the AGO.
- ◆ To determine and monitor all policy for the maintenance, acquisitions and programming for the House and its contents.

BOOK REVIEW

Fryer, Mary Beacock.

Elizabeth Posthuma Simcoe, 1762-1850. Toronto, Dundurn 1989.

Lieutenant Francis Simcoe, 1791-1812. Toronto, Dundurn, 1996.

John Graves Simcoe, 1752-1806. Toronto, Dundurn, 1998.

These three books provide a comprehensive picture of the life and times of Elizabeth Simcoe, her husband, John Graves Simcoe, and their son, Francis.

The book most recently published – John Graves Simcoe – completes the trilogy. It traces Simcoe's military career as commander of the Queen's Rangers during the American Revolution, and later as the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada and founder of the town of York (Toronto).

This book also includes an account of Simcoe's life after leaving Canada. He saw service in Europe and ultimately became a senior general in the British Army. However, his military career ended abruptly in 1896 when he was poisoned by inhaling lead paint fumes while aboard a newly painted ship, and subsequently died.

The Grange Library has a copy of each of these books, which together provide a valuable glimpse of this period in our history.

"TEAPOY"

Several people have expressed curiosity about the "teapoy" given by Sheila Tabacoff (training November 17, 1998) to the small canister now on the breakfast room table. The Dictionary, Encyclopaedia Britannica and the English Dictionary all define "teapoy" as a tripod support.

all agree that the word is also used to describe a tea-caddy.

The Oxford English Dictionary clears up the mystery by analyzing the word as coming from the Hindi word "tir" meaning three and a Persian word meaning foot. The word "tir" apparently rhymed with "tea" hence the erroneous association.

- Avril Stringer, *The Grange Research*

William Lyon McKenzie, a feminist (?) certainly a practical man

From: *The Colonial Advocate*, Dec 7, 1826

Re-print form (*Noah's Enquirer*)

Chastising a wife – The Chief Justice of Upper Canada, decided, in a recent trial, that "a man has a right to chastise his wife moderately, however ungallant such conduct might be considered" –

If this be the law & justice, I see no reason why we should deny the wife the same privilege.

An old sinner

From: the same edition above

An old sinner – Mr. Benj. Miller, a man 80 years of age, has been committed to jail in Chataque County, N.Y. for whipping his wife. In U.C. he would have met with quite different treatment.

WOOD

And Country Produce generally

From: *The Colonial Advocate*

February 9, 1826

For Your Information... from Pat Robertson

April 16, 1846

Emily Robinson marries John Henry Lefroy
(Captain in the Royal Artillery)

and

Lousa Robinson marries George William Allan
(Son of William Allan of Moss Park)

1808 Robert Baldwin – by Mr. Bourke – who advertised in the York Gazette in April & May of 1808

"Profile likenesses"

This is the first recording of silhouettes done in York

CONCERT

Saturday, May 1, 1999, 2 pm, Music Room at the Grange
To complement the exhibition *The Invisible Made Visible: Angels from the Vatican*, a concert of vocal music will be performed at The Grange. The performers are: Julie Harris: soprano; Peter Mahon: counter-tenor and Chris Dawes: organ continuo. They will be performing Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*.

\$10/\$7 AGO Members, students, seniors, University Settlement Music & Arts School students. For tickets and information, call 416-979-6608.

